

Nutrition Services Department of State Health Services

Effective August 1, 2009

Policy No. CS:02.0

Timeframes for Processing Applicants

Purpose

To provide program benefits expediently to individuals in nutritional need.

Authority

7 CFR Part 246.7 (f) (2) (ii)

Policy

The local agency (LA) shall process applicants within specific time frames.

Definitions

Processing means screening, determining (in)eligibility, notifying applicants of their (in)eligibility or placement on a waiting list, and/or issuing food instruments to eligible applicants.

Migrant farm worker means an individual whose principal employment is in agriculture on a seasonal basis, who has been so employed within the last 24 months, and who establishes, for the purpose of such employment, a temporary abode.

Procedures

- I. At initial certification, applicants shall be processed within the following time frames:
 - A. Pregnant women, infants under six months, and members of migrant household who state they shall be leaving the LA's service area within 30 days, shall be processed within 10 calendar days of the date they first request program benefits. (Under certain circumstances, the state agency (SA) shall

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- consider extending the 10-day processing time frame to a maximum of 15 calendar days. LAs shall submit, for SA approval, a written request with sufficient justification for an extension.)
- B. All other applicants shall be processed within 20 calendar days of the date they first request program benefits.
- II. The processing time frame begins when the individual visits the LA during clinic/office hours to make an oral or written request for program benefits. This date shall be the "Date of First Visit" in person on the Quick Intake Screen of the Texas WIC Information Network (WIN) system.
- A. If client visits the clinic in person to request an appointment, check "Y" on the Quick Intake Screen.
 - B. If client phones for an appointment, check "N" on the Quick Intake Screen.
- III. Accurate records of the "Date of First Visit" in person shall be kept.
- A. If the LA is unable to make appointments in the computer at the time requested, Form WIC-37, Quick Intake/In-State Transfer Form, shall be completed. The LA shall enter into the computer the date the appointment was made.
 - B. A LA may elect to develop its own written local policy on the procedure that shall be used to document the "Date of First Visit." The policy shall be specific and be kept for audit/review.
 - C. When an appointment is offered within the appropriate timeframe but the applicant cannot make the appointment, the local agency shall document the offer in the record.
- IV. The WIN system will automatically document the date services were scheduled for subsequent certifications; however, the LA shall note exceptions to the required processing timeframes on the participant's shopping list.

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Appointments for subsequent certification shall be on or before the certification expiration date of the current certification period.

- A. When an appointment is made after the certification expiration date of the current certification period, the LA shall document the reason why this occurred on the Shopping List retained in the clinic.
 - B. Acceptable reasons for making an appointment for subsequent certification past the certification expiration date of the current certification period include, but are not limited to, requests by clients.
- V. Unless the participant has already received benefits for the month, the LA shall issue benefits to participants at the same time they are notified of their eligibility. If eligibility is determined while the participant is at the LA, the participant shall be notified and issued benefits at that time.

Guidelines

- I. Refer to the Texas WIN Reference Manual for instructions on using the Quick Intake Screen.
- II. Although policy addresses requirements for visits in person, the expectation is that appointments will be made within established timeframes for telephone requests as well.